

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 PM-09 INR-10 L-03 NEA-10

NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 GAC-01 USIA-12 TRSE-00

MBFR-03 SAJ-01 DODE-00 H-02 NSC-10 SS-15 AID-20 RSR-01

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RO RUEHC/ SECSTATE WASH DC 8858

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BURSELS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 4123

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EFIN, IT, MT, NATO

SUBJECT: MALTA: SPECIAL PAYMENTS

REF: USNATO 2215, VALLETTA' S 0993

1. SUMMARY: WE DISCUSSED WITH FONOFF NATO OFFICE (WHICH HAS BRIEF FOR

MALTA SPECIAL PAYMENTS) POSSIBLE ITALIAN PROHOSAL THAT JANUARY 10 FIGURES BE USED AS BASIS FOR FUTURE PAYMENTS. FONOFF OFFICIAL ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THIS REMAINS ITALIAN POSITION ALTHOUGH IT HAS NOT YET BEEN DECIDED WHETHER TO BROACH PROPOSAL FORMALLY WITHIN NAC. ITALIAN POSITION NOT REPEAT NOT BASED ON ANY NEW ELEMENTS, BUT GOI BELIEVES SATISFACTORY SUPPLEMENT AT FIXED LEVEL IS BEST WAY TO AVOID TROUBLE WITH MINTOFF. SPECIAL PAYMENTS QUESTION NOT REPEAT NOT DISCUSSED DURING MINTOFF' S RECENT STOPOVER IN ROME. END SUMMARY:

2. IN SUPPORT OF ITALIAN POSTION, OFFICIAL SAID THAT FONOFF CONSIDERS IT IMPORTANT, FOR POLITICAL REASONS, THAT PAYMENTS TO
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MINTOFF SHOULD BE ON AS STABLE AND CONSTANT BASIS AS POSSIBLE IN ORDER TO AVOID GROUNDS FOR FUTURE WRANGLING OVER RELATIVELY SMALL AMOUNTS. ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT SAY SO DIRECTLY, IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE POLITICAL REASONS UPPERMOST IF OFFICIAL' S MIND WERE THE STATE OF ITALIAN- MALTESE BILATERAL RELATIONS WHICH HE CHARACTERIZED AS MOST SENSITIVE BECAUSE OF GEOGRAPHICAL CONSIDERATIONS. OFFICIAL STRESSED THAT VERY LITTLE EXTRA MONEY WAS INVOLVED AND ARGUED THAT IF ITALY COULD SEE ITS WAY CLEAR TO MAKE UP DIFFERENCES OWING TO CURRENCY FLUCTUATIONS, IT SEEMED REASONABLE THAT US, AN ONLY OTHER CONTRIBUTOR WHOSE CURRENCY HAD SUFFERED WITH RESPECT TO JANUARY 10 FIGURES, COULD MAKE SIMILAR SACRIFICES TO KEEP MINTOFF HAPPY.

3. IN REPLY, EMBOFF NOTED THAT WE HAD MADE BASIS OF SPECIAL PAYMENTS CALCULATIONS ABUNDANTLY CLEAR TO MINTOFF AND THAT HE HAD INDICATED WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT, ALBOIT GRUDGINGLY, MAY 14 INSTALLMENT ON THIS BASIS. EMBOFF ALSO POINTED TO IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS OF PRINCIPLES WHICH FORMED BASIS FOR OUR POSITION AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT ITALIAN WOULD SEE NEED, AS WE DID, OF TAKING A COORDINATED APPROACH TO PAYMENTS QUESTION AND OF NOT REPEAT NOT LETTING MALTESE KNOW OF INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTOR' S VIEWS. FONOFF OFFICIAL AGREED ON NEED FOR ALLIED COORDINATION AND SAID THAT GOI HAD NO REPEAT NO INTENTION OF INFORMING MALTESE BILATERALLY OF CURRENT ITALIAN VIEWS.

4 SUBSEQUENT CONVERSTATION WITH VICE DIRECTOR GENERAL POLITICAL AFFAIRS CONFIRMED ABOVE. VICE DG ADDED THAT ITALIANS BELIEVE ANY CHANGE IN WRONG DIRECTION (DECREASE) OF SUPPLEMENTAL AMOUNT WOULD TRIGGER CRISIS IN WHICH MINOFF' S DEMANDS, AS USUAL, WOULD BE HARD TO NEGOTIATE REASONABLY. IN GOI VIEW, SATISFACTORY FIXED LEVEL WOULD AVOID EVENTUAL PRETEXT FOR EVEN MORE ONEROUS DEMANDS. VOLPE

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